**Covenants and Consequences\* --- Promises and Punishments\***

\*Some promises God made were conditional. If obeyed – blessings occurred. If disobeyed – punishment occurred. Some promises God made were UNCONDITIONAL. They only depended on God’s love, grace, and faithfulness to be fulfilled. The Old Testament is the story of God’s promises made to humans created in His image and to His chosen people Israel.

**Four [4] Covenants between God and Israel, His chosen people –**

**Abrahamic Covenant –** [UNCONDITIONAL] Sign = Circumcision - Rom 4: 11.

God unconditionally promises three things to Abraham: Land, Descendants, and a Blessing.

Gen 12: 2 *“I will bless you.”* Gen12: 2 *“I will make your name great.”* Gen 12: 2 *“I will make you a great nation.”* Gen 13: 16 Abraham will have numerous physical descendants *“…as the dust of the earth.”* Gen 17: 4-6. Abraham will be the father of many nations. Gen 12: 1 *“Go to the land I will show you.”* Gen 12: 7; Gen 13: 14-15; Gen 15: 18-21.The geography of the land promised to Abraham and his descendants is laid out repeatedly.

Gen 12: 3. The families of the world will be blessed through Abraham’s descendants. *Christians believe this blessing refers to the Messiah, Jesus, who would come from the line of Abraham and subsequently David.*

**Mosaic Covenant –** [CONDITIONAL] Also called the **Sinai Covenant.** Sign = Sabbath.

Following the Exodus at Mount Sinai *[some call it Mount Horeb]* Yahweh made His covenant with the people of Israel. They agreed to worship only Yahweh and obey Yahweh’s law as given through Moses. If they did, Yahweh would bless them. If they broke this covenant, Yahweh would curse them and punish them. In general, Israel promised to worship no god but Yahweh, worship only in one place designated by Yahweh, and follow the Laws Yahweh gave to Moses to give to them; the 10 commandments and over 600 commands; the Torah.

Exodus 19: 5 God reminds the people they must obey His Law. Exodus 19: 8 They agree to do so. Exodus 19: 6 If the people obey Yahweh will make Israel a Kingdom of Priests and a Holy Nation. The Old Testament is filled with examples where Israel failed to keep their end of the Mosaic covenant; the first episode [Exodus 32] was exactly when Moses was on the mountain with Yahweh receiving the 10 commandments written on stone.

The Law of Moses would reveal to the people their sinfulness and their need for a Savior. Paul would agree. Rom 3:2. Paul said, *“No one can be declared righteous by observing the law. Through the law we become conscious of sin. The law teaches us our need for a Savior.”*

**Land Covenant –** [CONDITIONAL] Also called the **Palestinian Covenant; Deuteronomistic Covenant.**

Sign of this covenant = Keeping the Sabbath Exodus 31: 16.

Deut. 29: 1-29; Deut. 30: 1-10. This covenant was made after the Exodus to the generation of Israelites who were born in the wilderness as offspring of parents who had come out of Egypt. This occurred 40 years after the Mosaic Covenant. Their parents had been unfaithful, worshiping idols and disobeying Yahweh’s laws. So Yahweh punished them by having them wander in the wilderness until all those people who had come out of Egypt with Moses had died. This renewed or new covenant was made to the immediate descendants of those who left Egypt, a new generation of Israelites, in the plains of Moab just before they were to enter the Promised Land. This covenant amplifies and redefines the Abrahamic covenant with regards to the Promised Land and reconfigures and reconfirms Israel’s relationship with Yahweh.

Deut 29:12-15. Yahweh enters into this covenant *“sworn by an oath”* to make Israel His chosen people and that He may be their God. Deut 30:3-4. If the people disobeyed Yahweh would cause them to be scattered around the world. But [vs 5] Yahweh would eventually restore them as a nation and make them prosperous and numerous. When restored [vs 8] they will obey Yahweh perfectly. Yahweh will then [vs 9] cause them to prosper. [Also Deut4: 25-30]

In Deut 30:11-20 Israel is given a choice; obey Yahweh and be blessed and live or disobey Him and be cursed and die. This looks like a CONDITIONAL covenant. Some Bible scholars consider this covenant as UNCONDITIONAL as God predicts Israel‘s exile and their return to Him. These scholars say this covenant was fulfilled twice; [1.] at the end of the Babylon exile by Cyrus of Persia who sent all the Jews back to their homeland and rebuilt Jerusalem and their temple and [2.] after the Temple’s destruction of 70 CE the reestablishment of Israel as a nation in 1942 fulfilled this covenant.

**Davidic Covenant –** [UNCONDITIONAL] Also referred by some as the **Messianic Covenant.**

Yahweh promises David’s lineage would last forever and that his kingdom would never pass away. 2 Sam 7:8-17; 1 Chron 17:10b-15. This covenant was given to David through the prophet Nathan. Yahweh promised David in 2 Samuel ch. 7 a great name [vs9], a great house [vs 11], a great throne forever [vs 13], a great kingdom [vs 12] and this will last forever 2 Sam 7:16. The surety of this promise rests on Yahweh’s faithfulness and not on David’s or his descendant’s obedience. Solomon also refers to this covenant in his prayer of dedication to the temple Solomon built for Yahweh. 2 Chron 6:14-17.

Considering that after David and Solomon’s reigns the Israelites were almost constantly conquered or oppressed by enemy forces, their land occupied by foreigners, and their peoples finally exiled and scattered in many places, it is easy to see why the prophets and the Jewish people focused on the ‘Messianic Covenant’

Many Christians believe this was fulfilled in Jesus. Luke 1:22-33. Jesus called the Son of David. Matt 21:9. Jesus will be given *“…the throne of His ancestor David.” “…of His kingdom there will be no end.”*

Luke 1:32-33. Also in Isaiah 9:6-7 a Messiah through David is promised.